

12, Mayfields Close,  
Wembley Park,  
Middlesex.

19th July, 1953

Dear Professor Lederberg,

This is a letter that I find extreme difficulty in composing, in fact I have already destroyed my first two efforts.

My difficulty centres on the fact that I feel that I am offering you a gratuitous slap in the face. The point is that after all your more than kind efforts on my behalf, and after the way in which you have borne my many queries, I now have to tell you that it is extremely unlikely that I will, after all, be coming to Wisconsin this autumn.

Put bluntly like that you may, almost certainly will, be wondering just what has happened. In fact there is more than one reason, some financial and tied up with them some others of a personal and domestic nature. I heard yesterday from the administrators of the Fulbright Travel Grants that I had not been successful in my application for one - this mainly due to the overlong delay on the part of the Bank of England in granting my application to transfer sterling to the U.S. My financial position is such that I cannot afford the full expenses of this journey plus the continuing expenses which I will still have in the U.K. The nett effect would be to reduce my savings to zero. I have gone into this carefully and can see no logical alternative. I have made many applications for various grants in aid but all have been unsuccessful.

This drain on my finances I had envisaged as a possibility when first I wrote to you but, at that time, I was not unduly perturbed. In the intervening months, however, a change has taken place in my private affairs which alters the picture considerably. When first I applied for the appointment I was completely unattached this is not now the case. My fiancée and myself were both perfectly, if reluctantly, willing for the two or so years delay which my journey would involve, as long as I was able to obtain some form of financial assistance. You will appreciate, however, that I can

hardly be as ~~am~~ careless of my financial stability in present circumstances.

Please donot think that I am putting foreward feeble or frivolous excuses. I have thought long and seriously about this and will always regret not being able to come. I can, however, see no alternative. I had already started to make plans and arrangements for my journey many of which, unavoidably, have already involved me in expenses which I cannot recover. That cannot be helped, it is unfortunate that the rejection of my application for the Travel Grant had to come so late in the day.

I will arrange for the return of your reprints in due course. Do you still wish for cultures of the specific 'coli'? I have most of them already available and can soon obtain the others and also the sera and arrange for them to be sent on to you.

Please do not think too unkindly of me, I shall always be grateful for the chance which you were giving me and for all the kind help. I wonder, however, whether I would be really suitable since my knowledge of Genetics is little more than basic although I have been trying to remedy that in the past few months.

The above address will still find me for I have yet to have my formal leave of absence cancelled and do not yet know where my next appointment will take me.

Yours sincerely,

*H. Benoit*